

National Animal Identification System – May 2006

Background

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in partnership with states, tribal nations, and the private sector continues development of an initiative to identify certain animals and track their movements as they enter commerce. The National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is being developed to quickly and effectively control



animal diseases of concern such as Brucellosis, Foot and Mouth Disease, Pseudorabies, Scrapie, Tuberculosis, and Vesicular Stomatitis. Species Working Groups (SWG) comprised of producers and animal health

officials are developing plans for cattle, sheep, goats, bison, swine, poultry, horses, llamas, alpacas, deer, and elk.

The main components of NAIS are:

- Identification of properties (**premises identification**) involved in animal agriculture
- Unique **animal identification** or groups/lot identification of animals involved in commerce
- Tracking certain **animal movements** between premises

The USDA recently announced the following benchmarks for voluntary participation:

January 2007	25% premises registered
January 2008	70% premises registered
	40% animals identified (cattle & sheep)
January 2009	100% premises registered
	60% animals identified <1 year have complete movement data (cattle & sheep)

Premises that raise animals that never enter commerce may not need to participate.

Premises Identification

Animal health agencies in the US have issued premises identification numbers for many years.



These numbers are used to manage animal health programs such as tracking interstate animal movements, matching laboratory samples to a premises, and helping identify premises infected or exposed to diseases such as

Brucellosis, Exotic Newcastle, or Scrapie.

Previously, states have used different numbering criteria, often duplicating numbers or moving the premises number to a different location.

The new National Premises Identification System will provide national guidelines to issue these numbers. Under this plan the USDA has certified the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to issue National Premises Identification Numbers (PIN). The PIN represents a physical location or property and it is needed to obtain official identification devices (tags) and to report certain events. Examples of premises include ranches, auction markets, and fairs.

PIN =

Seven character unique identifier associated with a LOCATION

Example: ABC123K

The premises identification number remains with the location even if ownership changes. In situations where livestock is raised on public lands, premises identification will require input from animal health officials. Although a few states have legislated mandatory premises identification, this program is voluntary in California. To date, CDFA has issued over 3,000 premises numbers. Nationwide, USDA has issued over 250,000 PINs.

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Animal Identification The USDA has recognized a 15-digit Animal Identification Number (AIN) and a 13-character Group-Lot Identification Number (GIN) for use in all official programs. Other official numbering systems, such as those assigned for Scrapie and Brucellosis programs can still be used, but eventually will be phased out and transitioned to the AIN numbering system.

USDA maintains “technology neutrality” when it comes to identification; however, the Cattle Species Working Group has recommended visible Electronic Identification (EID) as the preferred identification method for cattle. This group further suggested the use of compliant tamper-proof Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags in the left ear. While brands will supplement cattle



identification, they are only used in 17 states. Other SWGs are considering different types of identification such as non-visible EID for horses.

AIN =

Fifteen digit unique identifier associated with an ANIMAL
Example: 840 123456789012345

GIN =

Thirteen character identifier associated with a group/lot of ANIMALS

Animal Tracking

This is the most complex aspect of the program requiring participants to collect and report information for certain events. When an event is reported, only the following information will be required:

1. Animal or group/lot identification number
2. Premises identification number
3. Event date
4. Event type (e.g., move in, lost tag, etc.)

Examples of reportable events include animals entering the US from foreign countries, animals being taken to auction markets or moving interstate. It is expected that multiple avenues will be developed to report events and that the information can be submitted by the producer or on behalf of the producer by a service provider.



The SWGs will provide USDA with guidelines for reportable events. For cattle, the SWG recommended that movements to auction markets be reported and the destination facility be responsible for reporting the movement. It is expected that NAIS implementation will be different across species and across the type and size of the operation.

A minimal amount of information is collected for NAIS; however, producers can leverage this information in their production management systems. For instance, a calf ranch or racetrack could enhance their inventory management using automated data collection. Technology that may enhance the collection of information such as RFID readers will be allowed, but not required.



Several USDA funded pilot projects across the nation are exploring different approaches to identify animals, collect and report information. CDFA is working with academia and producers to evaluate electronic identification in cattle, sheep, and horses.

Many questions still need to be answered about NAIS. It is imperative to continue NAIS development to ensure the health of agriculture is not compromised and animal agriculture continues to be a viable sector of the economy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

USDA and CDFA Animal Health Branch Offices

Premises & Animal Identification	916-657-4789
Sacramento (Main Office)	916-654-1447
Modesto	209-491-9350
Ontario	909-947-4462
Redding	530-225-2140
Tulare	559-685-3500
USDA Vet Services - Area Office	916-857-6170

www.cdfa.ca.gov/pais or www.usda.gov/nais

Obtain a Premises Identification Number at

www.californiaid.org

or by calling 866-325-5681